

# COMMON INCIDENT COMMAND CENTER SITUATIONS

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## FISH KILLS

(MARCH 2006)

### Potential Contacts and/or Report Distribution: (BOLD = REQUIRED CONTACTS)

- The **Regional Office Director** and **MDC Fish Kill Staff** should be notified immediately. Others to consider for notification and report distribution include Water Pollution Branch, Drinking Water Branch, and the EPA.
- E-mail (January 4, 2005 memo on Guidance for EER E-Mail Messages) if an EER Response is made.

### Duty Officer/OSC Considerations:

- If a fish kill is obviously from natural causes, then the EER staff will not typically respond. The MDC Fish Kill staff will conduct the investigation.
- Fish kills from natural causes in ponds or stagnant water often occur in the summer after a rain event, or after several days of cloud cover following long periods of clear, hot weather conditions, especially in waters with excessive algae. Although most algal blooms make the water appear green, some are blue and may look like a paint spill.
- For fish kills caused by a chemical release, CAFO incident during non-business hours, or unknown substance, contact MDC to report the incident, and dispatch an OSC to assist in the investigation.
- For fish kills caused by a CAFO incident during business hours, contact the Regional Office and determine if Regional Office staff is going to respond. If Regional Office is unable to respond, dispatch an OSC.
- In a hazardous materials or unknown environment, MDC personnel have been instructed not to conduct their investigation until it has been determined that no threat to human health exists. In a situation where the air quality or overall safety at the site is questionable (i.e., whenever the quality of the environment calls for Level C protection or greater), EER personnel will be responsible for collecting samples and investigating the fish kill with input from the MDC personnel on-site.
- When a chemical spill is involved, all on-scene personnel lacking Hazmat training and the appropriate level of PPE should not be allowed into the "Hot Zone" to conduct investigations. Enumerating dead and dying fish with the expectation of recovering a future financial settlement shall not supersede worker safety.
- If a pollution source is identified, appropriate samples should be collected upstream and downstream to help document the extent of environmental impact.
- If a source cannot be found, appropriate samples should be collected within the area affected by the fish kill in an effort to determine the cause. If possible, a sample should also be collected at an upstream location to document normal background conditions.
- Typical water quality field parameters (e.g., temperature, conductivity, pH, and dissolved oxygen) should be measured within the fish kill area and above and below the affected area to help delineate the extent of the pollution. If samples are collected for laboratory analysis, then water quality field parameters should be measured at each sample location.